

WASHINGTON, DC – Rep. Rob Wittman (VA-01), Chairman of the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Readiness, made the following statement following a briefing from Undersecretary of Defense Comptroller Bob Hale on the status of furloughs for the Department of Defense (DoD) civilian workforce.

In the briefing, department officials stated that while they are making progress on mitigating the effects of the furlough, adverse impacts continue and are expected to worsen if sequestration is not addressed. Officials stated that while reprogrammings and other actions have mitigated the most adverse affects of this year's budget challenges, finding an additional \$52 billion in cuts next year poses a significant challenge and will have long-term impacts on training and modernization. Defense officials also said that while the department will make every effort to avoid another furlough, every potential option to save money is on the table for next year.

“While DoD is looking to minimize effects of furloughs on the military mission, their message today was to inform Congress of the harm furloughs have already had on our force readiness. They echoed what I am hearing from my constituents -- that dedicated patriots employed by DoD are disappointed, frustrated and are fearful of an unknown future. Core mission capabilities will be reduced because DoD will be operating with a smaller force. These impacts will continue and worsen into next year if sequestration continues. That’s why the House has voted to avert sequestration and I continue to work to restore the funding our military needs. Our nation is faced with constrained resources while we have forces fighting overseas, we are withdrawing from Afghanistan, and we are challenged to rebuild the readiness of our force that has been seriously degraded. What we heard from officials today was the real-time effects of political indecision and indiscriminate furlough implementation. These results can be avoided. Congress and the Administration have hard choices ahead but supporting those who keep this country safe must be paramount. I am hopeful that improved planning will allow us to avoid these across the board unspecific cuts in the future,” Wittman said.

Congressman Rob Wittman represents the First District of Virginia. He serves on the House Natural Resources Committee and the House Armed Services Committee where he is the Chairman of the Readiness Subcommittee.